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prior to World War II

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1. In order to comprehend the changes which the Communist occupation has in-
troduced into the organization of Polish universities and scientific insti-
tutes, we must know, even along the most general lines, their structure before
World War II. This is important also, since this structure differed dis-
tinctly from that of similar institutions in the US. Herewith is presented:
 - (a) A general description of the organization and position of the
Polish universities and their similar schools.
 - (b) A general description of the governmental office which super-
vised such schools.
 - (c) An enumeration of those schools which existed prior to World
War II.
 - (d) An enumeration and description of the Polish Academy and
other learned societies.
2. [redacted] the Polish primary
and secondary educational system. This system, even after certain reforms
introduced prior to 1939, had little influence on the universities. [redacted]
in the first part [redacted] describe, briefly, the relations which existed
between the secondary and the higher system of education.
3. To understand the structure of the Polish universities prior to 1939, there
must be given a short explanation of the so-called higher (post graduate)
system of education. The main task of the Polish High Schools (Gymnasiums)
was not practical, but theoretical, i.e. those students, whose approximate
age was 18 years, were designated to become members of the "intelligenzia",
after completion of prescribed courses. Therefore, the program of these
schools was pointed towards preparation for later study in the Universities
and other similar schools.

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4. A student receiving a certificate or diploma (Matura) upon completion of the gymnasium courses, was required to possess (theoretically) sufficient knowledge to acquire further learning without the help of teachers. He must also have reached a certain cultural level. At the termination of the gymnasium program, an obligatory religious and cultural education was completed. However, at this point the student had very little preparation for professional life, and if his education were not continued further, he could obtain only a modest position in the private or state offices.
5. The gymnasium program corresponded approximately to four years of US high school plus the two first years of college. In Poland there were both governmental and private gymnasiums. In addition to this there were also many other kinds of vocational schools. These schools, however, did not entitle the student to enter the higher (post graduate) schools. If, upon leaving one of these schools, a student wanted to enter one of the universities, he was required to take a very difficult governmental examination in order to obtain a diploma (matura). Possession of this diploma alone gave the student the right to undertake post-graduate study.
6. The post-graduate schools were either governmental or private, and were divided into two classes: vocational (technical) and academic. There were approximately 30 technical schools. These did not possess the honors, privileges, and autonomy of the academic schools. For example, the director of such schools was nominated by the government or owners, and not elected. The professors were teachers, rather than scientists. These schools did not confer scientific titles, such as Master or Doctor, and the course was three years. The principal aim of these vocational or technical schools was a practical one, namely: to prepare students to earn their living at some trade. Thus, these schools prepared engineers without diploma, so to speak, and the future heads of the elementary schools.
7. A governmental charter was required to establish a state (governmental) vocational or private school. This type did not have the "university character".

The organization of universities and other academic schools was similar to the schools in other states of Central Europe, as, for example Germany, Austria, and Italy. This tradition went back to the Middle Ages.

Special laws had to be published in order to establish an academic school, whether state-owned or private, since a governmental charter was not sufficient. By tradition from the Middle Ages, only theology, philosophy (arts and science), law and medicine belonged to the university. When in the 18th and 19th centuries there appeared a necessity for higher education in the other branches of knowledge (technical and commercial), independent schools were created. These schools possessed structure and privilege, just as did the universities. Thus, in describing the structure of a university, we also describe the structure of the academic schools.
8. In principle, the university was an autonomic educational institution which was governed by the body of professors and was supervised by the state. University employees were divided into three classes:
 - (a) The members of the university.
 - (b) The auxiliary teacher staff.
 - (c) Higher and lower officials.

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9. Only ordinary, extraordinary professors and private-docents were members of the university. Both kinds of professors, ordinary and extraordinary, possessed the same rights and privileges with the exception that the "rector" or head of the university could be elected from the class of ordinary professors. These also received higher salaries. Normally, an extraordinary professor, after serving several years and after publishing new scientific papers, was promoted to the rank of ordinary professor. However, no one professor was subordinated to another. Each professor derived his title from the "chair" which he occupied. Thus, there were professors of mathematics, philosophy, English, etc. There could be several "chairs" for the same kind of knowledge, but these were not incorporated in any one department, eg. mathematics. A special library, laboratory and clinic, so to speak, was an adjunct of each "chair". These establishments were directed by the professor who also hired the employees. The hiring had to be confirmed by the university, but it employed people arbitrarily, without the consent of the professor.
10. When appointed, a professor held his chair until he was 65 years old. An extension to 70 years could be made by the university, but only with government (state) concurrence. The professor emeritus had several privileges, but could not hold lectures or take part in the administration of the university. Well-known scientists could receive the title of honorary professor, and could hold lectures indefinitely.
11. A private docent was a scientist who was a member of the university (ie., the corporation), but he held no chair, nor did he receive any salary. He took no part in the administration of the university. His duties included 20 hours of lectures for each year from the field of knowledge from which he received his title of docent.
12. A professor had to give five hours of lectures per week, plus two hours of "seminary" (discussions with the students). In order to become a professor, it was usually necessary to serve several years as a private docent. In the giving of their lectures, the professors and private docents were not bound by state or university regulations. They were obliged to lecture on their specific fields, but could do so in whatever way they preferred. In these lectures they were free to proclaim any religious, social or political opinion, and they were also permitted to prepare their own lecture programs. They were bound only by the program of the examinations. This program was established by the government and explained what a student must know in order to receive, for example, a Master degree. Thus, during an examination a professor was obliged to learn whether the student knew the required reading in sufficient degree. Often a student had to learn from text books indicated by the professor. Evidently, the professors were obliged to ascertain whether the students performed the exercises prescribed by the program of examinations. However, the professor's main duty was to lecture rather than teach.
13. Professors and private docents could be deprived of their positions only by reason of criminal or dishonorable activity. But this process was a very difficult and long one.

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14. The following belonged to the auxiliary teacher staff:

(a) Substitutes of professors:

If a "chair" vacancy occurred, and if, for some reason or other a suitable candidate could not be found, then the university, with state concurrence, could hire a substitute professor for an interim period. This substitute performed the duties of professor, received a salary, but did not take part in the administration of the university. As a substitute, he was not a bona fide member of the university.

(b) People hired to give the special lectures:

If a need arose for certain kinds of lectures which the professor was not qualified to give, then the university could hire suitable men to make these specific lectures for one year's duration.

(c) So-called junior and senior assistants and adjuncts:

These were employed to run the library, laboratory and "clinics" which were adjunct to the chair. They also assisted the students in understanding the lectures, and in performing the exercises prescribed in them.

They were employed for one, three, and nine year periods, and their nomination was presented to and confirmed by the university at the professor's request.

(d) Teachers of foreign languages:

Special teachers were employed for this purpose. (Professor of a foreign language did not teach the actual speaking of this language. He gave only theoretical instruction in it). These teachers gave the practical instructions in speaking the language but gave no examinations.

15. The members of the auxiliary teaching staff were not members of the university, and had no voice in policy and administration. Very often, however, the private docents were nominated for groups a, b, and c. This enabled them to receive more money.
16. The so-called higher and lower officials were secretaries, treasurers, and librarians. The higher officials were hired by the university with government (state) agreement. All these people, from first secretary to last janitor, had no voice in university affairs.
17. Each Polish university was divided into several faculties, each faculty being similar to the "schools" in American universities. Each chair belonged to a designated faculty. Thus, there were faculties of theology, law, medicine, arts, sciences, etc.
18. All professors (ordinary and extraordinary) constituted a faculty council. The body of private docents sent one or two delegates to sit with the council. These appointments were of one year's duration. The council elected a Dean of Faculty, whose term of office was one year. The former dean served as "pro-dean" (vice dean), and he substituted another dean if he himself were unable to attend a meeting of the council. This council also elected a delegate from the faculty to the Senate of the University for a year's term. The council revised the affairs of the faculty.

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19. The University Senate was comprised of deans, pro-deans, delegates from each faculty, and the rector and pro-rector of the university. The rector was head (president) of the university and was elected by all the professors for a period of one year. A rector had to be an ordinary professor. A former rector served as pro-rector. The duties of the Senate were to confirm decisions of the faculty council, the administrative affairs of the university and relations with the state (government).
20. The nomination of a professor to the council was made as follows: If there was a vacancy for a chair, the council of faculty elected a candidate according to prescribed methods. Ordinarily he was a private docent. The name of the person elected, after confirmation by the Senate, was sent to the government. If concurred with at this level, then the candidate had to receive a nomination from the president of the government.
21. Anyone receiving a Doctor's degree, after publishing several scientific papers, could apply for the title of private docent. A member of the faculty was required to sponsor the applicant. An application could be rejected without explanation. If accepted, a candidate had to pass a special examination. A resolution by the faculty to award this title had to be confirmed by the Senate and later by the government.
22. A Polish university possessed certain privileges, one of which was that police could not enter the campus or the university buildings without permission of the rector, even if a crime had been committed.
23. Students completing their courses received the title of Master of whatever field they had specialized in. Time required for the course was from four to six and one half years. The order of examinations was not established. A student could chose the order which he preferred. After receiving a Master's degree, a candidate could present a written thesis to get a Doctor's degree. If this thesis were accepted by the faculty, then the applicant took a special examination.
24. The university was not responsible for giving students sports activities, housing, or other facilities. Nor did it supervise the behavior and moral conduct of the students. If a student committed a crime and was sent to prison, he was automatically expelled from the student roster. Students founded their own organizations and these were supervised by the university Senate and not by the state.
25. Given above is a very superficial picture of the organization of the academic schools. Some time before 1939 there was a governmental tendency to introduce some reforms in this field. Some were introduced, but some were subsequently revoked.
26. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education was the governmental office which supervised all Polish schools, governmental and private, except military. A union of religious affairs and public education was not only the result of some tradition, it also had a practical reason, because a religious education was obligatory in the elementary and the secondary system of education. As was said, there was no such education in any school of the higher system, ie. in the unacademic or academic.

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27. A minister (a chief) of this ministry was a member of the Cabinet of Ministers and was under the Prime Minister (Premier). Ordinarily, there were one or two deputy ministers who were not members of the Cabinet of Ministers. A deputy minister (vice-minister) did not participate in the sessions of the cabinet and if a cabinet was dismissed, he could remain. Ordinarily, he was not a politician, but an experienced functionary.
28. A ministry was divided into several departments. The chiefs of them had the title of director. One of these departments was of higher schools and of the sciences. The whole system of higher education and the affairs of the learned societies were subjected to this department. The work and policy of this department was ordinarily supervised by one of the deputy ministers.
29. The principal affairs of this department were:
 - (a) The preparation of a budget concerning these schools for the next year.
 - (b) The preparation of new bills.
 - (c) The preparation of the orders of minister, eg. about the programs of examinations, the creation of a new chair, etc.
 - (d) The nominations of the new professors and the confirmations of the new private docents and the professors of the private schools.
 - (e) The nominations of some employees of the higher schools.
 - (f) The subsidies for the learned societies, for scientific publications, and for individual scientists.
 - (g) Some student affairs.
30. All the more important affairs and all nominations were confirmed by the minister. The projects of the new budget and the new bills were sent to the parliament of Poland. Confirmations of new private docents, new professors of the private schools and the nominations of professors of the unacademic schools also were among his duties. A nomination of the new professors of the governmental academic schools had to be confirmed by the president of the state.
31. The relations between the Ministry and an academic school (eg. a University) were maintained through the rector of the school. Only with the permission of the rector could the deans or the individual professors negotiate with the ministry. The ministry could not intervene in the program or methods of teaching; it had to supervise such things as maintenance of regulations.
32. As in any other governmental institution, the expenses of an academic school were controlled by the supreme office of control, which saw to it that the money provided by the budget was spent according to the law.
33. As in many other societies and corporations, the so-called learned societies were supervised by the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry of Education was interested only in the event a society requested a subsidy for some scientific purpose. A minister could give a subsidy from a special fund provided for this aim.

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34. Thus, in respect to the academic schools and the learned societies, the power of the ministry and, therefore, of the government, was limited. The government could put pressure on a university by making restrictions in the budget or by preventing the nominations of new professors, but there was no direct way for the government to nominate a professor who was not chosen by this school, or to introduce changes in the program. The situation of the unacademic schools was entirely different. They were completely dependent, and submitted to the orders of the government.

35. Before 1939 there were 13 governmental, six private and two military academic schools in Poland, as follows:

(a) In Warsaw:

- (1) University of Warsaw. Eight faculties: (a) Catholic Theology, (b) Protestant Theology, (c) Law, (d) Medicine, (e) Humanities (Arts), (f) Sciences, (g) Veterinary Medicine, (h) Pharmaceutics.
- (2) Polytechnical School (School of Engineering). Six faculties.
- (3) Central School of Agriculture. Three faculties.
- (4) School of Dentistry. It did not give a title of Doctor.
- (5) Academy of Fine Arts, (painting and sculpture). Only gave a Master degree.
- (6) Central Commercial School. Private. Three faculties. It could give only the Master and Doctor degree, but not a title of private docent.
- (7) Free University. Three faculties. It could give only the Master degree. It possessed a branch in Lodz.

(b) In Cracow:

- (1) The university. Five faculties: (a) Catholic Theology, (b) Law, (c) Medicine, (d) Philosophy (Arts and Sciences), (e) Agriculture.
- (2) School of Mining. Three faculties.
- (3) Academy of Fine Arts (painting and sculpture). Only gave a Master degree.
- (4) Commercial School. Private. It could give only the Master degree.

(c) In Lwów:

- (1) University. Six faculties: (a) Catholic Theology, (b) Law, (c) Medicine, (d) Arts, (e) Sciences, (f) Agriculture.
- (2) Polytechnical School. Six faculties.
- (3) Academy of Veterinary Medicine.
- (4) Commercial School. Private, (only Master degree).

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(d) In Poznan:

(1) University. Five faculties: (a) Law, (b) Medicine, (c) Arts, (d) Sciences, (e) Agriculture.

(2) Commercial School. Private. (Only Master degree).

(e) In Wilno:

(1) University. Seven faculties: (a) Catholic Theology, (b) Law, (c) Medicine, (d) Arts, (e) Sciences, (f) Fine Arts, (g) Agriculture.

(f) In Lublin:

(1) Catholic University. Four faculties: (a) Catholic Theology, (b) Canon Law, (c) Law, (d) Arts. Private. Possessed the full rights, i.e. it could give not only Master and Doctor degree, but also a title of private docent.

(g) In Lodz:

(1) Free University. (A branch of the Warsaw Free University). Beside this academic school there were two special military schools of this same kind:

a. School of the General Staff.

b. School for the Intendancy.

They belonged to the Ministry of Military Affairs and served for the professional education of the higher career officers. Evidently, the Ministry of Education had nothing to do with these schools, or with any other military schools (for career and reserve officers, etc.). But only these two military schools maintained the educational level of the academic schools.

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